

ALPINE: 11,500'  
*Rocky Mountain National Park*

SUBALPINE: 10,000'  
*Rocky Mountain National Park*

MONTANE: 8,000'  
*Rocky Mountain National Park*

FOOTHILLS: 6,000'  
*Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park*

PLAINS: 4,000'  
*Loveland*

Have you wondered why some plants are often found in one area but not in another? All plants require a certain combination of soil, moisture, and climatic conditions for healthy growth, and plants with similar needs will be found in the same vicinity. Some plants are so sensitive to these conditions that they may be restricted to the life zone that best fills their needs. Others, such as the fringed sage, are tolerant of many conditions and survive in several life zones.

A group of different plants, which live together in the same life zone, make up the plant community of that area. Life zones differ greatly as one travels north or south of the equator, but changes in altitude also produce great changes in soil, moisture, sun and climate. Because of the many different elevations, Colorado is fortunate to have a variety of life zones - and a variety of plants.

The wildflowers in this area are an important part of the ecosystem. Elevations in the park range from 5743 feet to 6700 feet, and up to 8450 on the trails. Noticing where the plant is growing, and what other plants grow with it is helpful in identification (on north/south slope? in sun/shade?)

You are now located in the 340 acres of Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park at the "Foothills Life Zone" and can now open this guide to information about the wildflowers that bloom and grow in this zone.

For further information about current wildflowers in bloom in the area, please contact the Mountain Parks Office at (970) 667-5181.

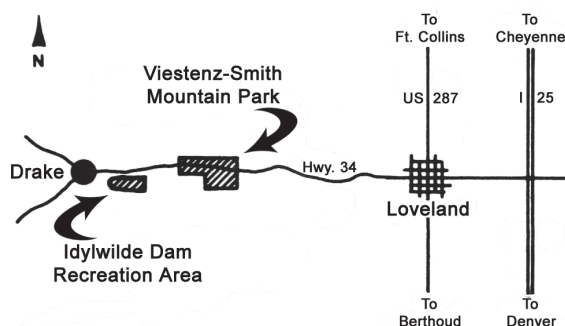
### Helpful Field Guides:

"Plants of Rocky Mountain National Park"  
by Ruth Ashton Nelson.

"Rocky Mountain Flora" and "Colorado Flora-Eastern Slope"  
by William A. Weber.

"Wildlife and Plants of the Southern Rocky Mountains"  
Revised Edition by Charles Yocom, William Weber, Richard Biedleman, and Donald Malick .

"A Field Guide to Rocky Mountain Wildflowers" by John J. Craighead, Frank C. Craighead, Jr., and Ray J. Davis



All plants, animals, and other natural features are protected by park regulation against removal, destruction, and injury. ***Plant collecting by permission only.***

Please observe posted hours, and rules & regulations of the park. For further general park info, or to inquire about a reservation for an area in the park, please call the Administrative Office at (970) 962-2727.



City of Loveland

Provided by the City of Loveland  
Parks and Recreation Department  
Mountain Parks Division  
[www.CityofLoveland.org](http://www.CityofLoveland.org)

# Wild Flowers

of Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park  
in the Big Thompson Canyon  
Loveland, Colorado



Photo courtesy of Brady Hilgenberg, 2003

An Informative Guide to  
Wildflowers of the Area

The essential parts of every flower are the pistils (female parts) and the stamens (male parts). The Stamens produce pollen grains which fertilize the Ovules in the Pistil to develop into seeds. Showy Petals surround these basic organs and attract insects for polination to occur. Sepals and green Bracts lie below the Petals for support. Variations in the number and arrangement of Pistils and Stamens, plus the shape and color of the Petals and Sepals aid in identifying different flowers. These basic concepts will be used in any flower guide for identification and should be understood before one can attempt naming an unknown plant.

Over fifty species of plants grow in this area and throughout the Rocky Mountain region. The following wildflowers are just some of the most common in the area and can be observed blooming mostly during June and July:



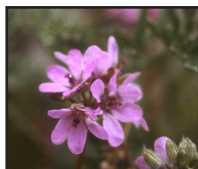
### PASQUE FLOWER-

*Pulsatilla patens*  
Cup shaped "hairy" lavender blossoms with gold centers. One of the first plants to emerge from the snow in

early Spring. Grows in clumps among the rocks or on the open grassland.

### WILD GERANIUM- *Geranium* spp.

Plants with five pink or purplish flowers, usually with darker veins, five pistils, and lobed, toothed leaves. Grows in dry fields and open forests, often around rocks.



### LARKSPUR- *Delphinium nuttallianum*

An early blooming plant from 4-12 inches high, with very rich, dark purplish-blue flowers and a prominent spur. Leaves are finely cut, and sparse on the stem.

### PRICKLYPEAR CACTUS-

*Opuntia polyacantha*  
Thickened fleshy stems covered with spines. Showy, yellow, many-petaled flowers. Found in dry, sunny areas. The fruits may be eaten in a variety of ways after peeling and the seeds may be eaten in soups or dried and ground into flour.



### NODDING ONION- *Allium cernuum*

Plants from bulbs, pink or whitish stalked flowers. Grasslike leaves. Distinct onion smell when bruised. Edible bulb and whole plant can be rubbed on the body to repel insects. Common in fields and hillsides.

### PENSTEMON- *Penstemon Cyaneus*

Tubular purplish-blue flowers with a spreading lip growing one to three feet high with erect stems. Abundant in open, rocky places, favoring moist soil. Blooming from June through August.



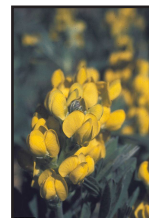
### SPIDERWORT-

*Tradescantia occidentalis*  
Three-petaled bluish-purple flowers which last only through one day, then melt into a slimy residue. Long, grass-like leaves. Very common in Spring and early Summer on rocky slopes or in the foothills.



### GOLDEN BANNER-

*Thermopsis divaricarpa*  
A very common plant a foot or more high of open woods, meadows, and hillsides. With bright yellow sweet-pea-like flowers and leaflets in threes. Provides masses of color throughout June and July.



### LAMBERT CRAZYWEED-

*Oxytropis lambertii*  
A showy, **poisonous** plant 6-10 inches high with bright reddish-purple flowers and silvery foliage. Blooming from the middle of June through until Autumn. Common in fields and open hillsides. Often mistaken for non-poisonous milk vetch.

### YELLOW STONECROP-

*Sedum stenopetalum*  
Common plant of stony ground with smooth fleshy leaves adapted for water storage which appear very early in Spring, with the yellow flowers not opening until mid-June. 3 inches tall.



### COMMON MULLEIN-

*Verbascum thapsus*  
A tall plant, 2-10 feet high found on roadsides and waste ground. With unbranched stems, woolly leaves and long, dense spikes of small yellow flowers.

### WESTERN WALLFLOWER-

*Erysimum asperum*  
Four-petaled yellow flowers with slender bases. Very common on fields and open slopes. Member of the mustard family with narrow leaves.



### BOULDER RASPBERRY-

*Oreobatus (Rubus) deliciosus*  
A common shrub, bearing many large white blossoms 1-3 inches across, resembling single white roses. Lacks spines, and grows abundantly among rocks. **Fruit is not edible.**

### SULPHUR FLOWER-

*Eriogonum umbellatum*  
Umbrella-like clusters of small, smooth yellow flowers, and woolly basal leaves. Flowers often turning reddish late in season. Common on dry, rocky hillsides.



Photos in this pamphlet are provided by the following publications: "A Field Guide to Rocky Mountain Wildflowers", "Colorado Flora: Eastern Slope", and "Weeds of the West", along with the web site for the **United States Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service** located here: <http://plants.usda.gov/index.html>

If you happen to encounter any of these species in the park as you are visiting, and would like to supply us with a more recent photo of the plant in Viestenz-Smith Mountain Park, you may do so by sending the photo here:  
City of Loveland - Parks & Recreation Dept.  
500 E Third Street - Suite 200  
Loveland, CO 80537

Attn.: Laurel Lesser  
You may also send digital photos to:  
Email: [lessel@ci.loveland.co.us](mailto:lessel@ci.loveland.co.us)  
If we use your photo for print or online, credit will be given.

